PHILADELPHIA, PA—On Monday, April 20, 2009, Congressman Joe Sestak (PA-07) spoke at the ROTC Awards Luncheon held in the Lincoln Memorial Room of Union League of Philadelphia and was introduced by Board Member Tom Seigenthaler USN (Ret.). The Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) is a leadership program that integrates traditional college coursework with innovative and realistic leadership training. ROTC courses are designed to prepare men and women to become officers and to instill skills that enable students to succeed in college and in the future.

"I commend each young man and woman present today," said Congressman Sestak. "Your desire to seek a position of leadership in our armed forces during time of war reflects a unique set of personal values and some exceptional parenting. Now, more than ever, our nation is in need of the highest sense of authenticity and accountability in its military, business, governmental and scientific leadership corps. Your generation faces extraordinary challenges. Those challenges are solvable only if those fortunate enough to be placed in a position of leadership understand that they are consistently and continuously accountable for their actions and those above and below them in their chain of command."

Each year, the ROTC units from local colleges and universities nominate one cadet or midshipman each to receive the National Defense Industrial Association ROTC Award. These awards are given annually by the Delaware Valley Chapter for outstanding performance in officer training, for maintaining a high standard in academic achievement and leadership, and for displaying exceptional interest in all matters pertaining to defense preparedness and national security.

The 2009 award recipients are:

Stephen Hammer – Princeton University – Army ROTC – Ross Award Winner (and Rhoads Scholarship Recipient)

Shawn DeLong - Saint Joseph's University - Army ROTC

James Doherty - Widener University - Army ROTC

Lillianne Grove – University of DE – Air Force ROTC

Phillip Guest - Drexel University - Army ROTC

Richard Haley - Villanova University - Naval ROTC

Stephen Love - Rowan University - Army ROTC

Andrew Voss - University of PA - Naval ROTC

Nadine Wiley - Temple University - Army ROTC

Jacob Wishko – University of DE – Army ROTC

ROTC is a program of military instruction that takes place on 270 college and university campuses nation-wide. The origin of Military Instruction in Civilian colleges dates back to 1819 when Captain Alden Partridge founded the American Literary, Scientific and Military Academy, at Northfield, Vermont. Today, it is Norwich University. In 1862 the U.S. Congress recognized the need for military training at civilian educational institutions. The Morrill Land Grant Act was enacted to fulfill this need. This Act donated lands and moneys to establish colleges which would provide practical instruction in agriculture, mechanical and military sciences.

The United States Reserve Officer's Training Corps as we know it today dates from the National Defense Act of 1916. World War I prevented the full development of civilian educators and Military professionals working together. At the conclusion of WWI, the program was fully implemented on college campuses. The success of this effort was demonstrated in WWII, Korea, Vietnam, Desert Storm, and recently Afghanistan and Iraq. College campuses provided quality officers to meet the rapidly expanding needs of mobilization. In 1964 the ROTC Vitalization Act improved the program by adding scholarships and expanding Junior ROTC opportunities. Women joined the program in 1972.

Born and raised in Delaware County, former 3-star Admiral Joe Sestak served in the Navy for 31 years and now serves as the Representative from the 7th District of Pennsylvania. He led a series of operational commands at sea, including Commander of an aircraft carrier battle group of 30 U.S. and allied ships with over 15,000 sailors and 100 aircraft that conducted operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. After 9/11, Joe was the first Director of "Deep Blue," the Navy's anti-terrorism unit that established strategic and operations policies for the "Global War on Terrorism." He served as President Clinton's Director for Defense Policy at the National Security Council in the White House, and holds a Ph.D. in Political Economy and Government from Harvard University. According to the office of the House Historian, Joe is the highest-ranking former military officer ever elected to the U.S. Congress.

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